

**Savannah City Government
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES
MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION
January 10, 2013 – 11:00 am**

PRESENT: Mayor Edna B. Jackson, Presiding
Alderman Van R. Johnson, II Mayor Pro-tem
Alderman Mary Osborne, Vice-Chairman of Council
Aldermen John Hall, Carol Bell, Mary Ellen Sprague
Tom Bordeaux and Estella Shabazz

Acting City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter
City Attorney W. Brooks Stillwell

ABSENT: Alderman Tony Thomas (Out of town representing the City of Savannah at the National League of Cities meeting).

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

World Trade Center of Savannah

Trip Tollison of SEDA gave an overview of the World Trade Center (WTC) and the benefits Savannah can reap from this sponsorship. He stated they (Center) have spent the last year and a half getting the World Trade Center of Savannah up and running and realizes that Savannah is increasingly becoming a very popular location for new business. They promote Savannah by hosting a large number of inbound delegations, showing them what Savannah has to offer from the ports to the airport, and acknowledged that they also need to visit other countries and nations. They are seeking some strategic partners and hopes Savannah will come on board at the \$50,000 level which will raise the bar for others to join this collaborative alliance.

He stated the Greater Savannah International Alliance (GSIA) is charged with everything outside of the business development scope as it relates to international expansion whether it's cultural or through tourism. On the business side they are really trying to take the WTC to the next level and selling Savannah within the country and also to the outside world is a major focus. They just completed a strategic study that identified the top ten countries as targets for attracting the best opportunities for investments and jobs. Out of this study, Brazil and Germany were recognized as the leading two international destinations for this endeavor, and a trip has to these countries been planned for sometime this year. He ended by stating the WTC would love to have the city of Savannah on board to be the WTC's first founding partner.

Alderman Sprague asked if the WTC gets audited and if the City has a presence on their board. Mr. Tollison replied yes their auditors are Holland, Henry, & Bromley who audits them every year. Also, Brooks Stillwell is on their board as Secretary Treasurer and they are also in the process of adding people to their board which is still very new.

Alderman Sprague stated that if the City will be giving money the Council should also be allowed to appoint at least one member to the WTC. Alderman Bell commented that she agreed with the recommendation (even before the meeting) that Council have representation on the WTC board. Attorney Stillwell commented that they were represented through the GSIA, but all

agreed that this was not the same. The Mayor stated that she had to leave for another meeting, but will get with Trip and some other board members to discuss board representation.

Alderman Shabazz asked what the benefits would be for the City if they join in this endeavor, and Mr. Tollison stated that the City's involvement and the investment would allow WTC to do more with inbound delegations. Currently WTC's hands are tied as to what they can and cannot do when the different groups come in because they don't have sufficient resources. He stated this is why they are soliciting banks and other partners such as the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, Sun Trust, and the national offices of Colony Bank. This allows them to pay for incoming delegations, trips abroad and will also cover the eight (8) programs slated for 2013. He briefly summarized a 2012 program which taught various companies how to export goods outside of Savannah to other markets and countries, and sharing this knowledge and resources is what they are seeking funding for.

The Mayor stated that the City should join forces with WTC, and validate what they are doing. She said she has used the Savannah Employment Development Authority (SEDA) a lot for arriving guests and has also asked them to sponsor functions when City funds were not available. She said collaborating with WTC not only confirms them but also shows that Savannah is a partner in securing investments and jobs for the City. The Mayor is hoping Council will get on board with this investment as this alliance will unlock doors, keep the lines of communication open and the City will sit at the table and have a hand in decision-making. She also stated that the WTC is not going anywhere and along with the City will continue to grow and grow. The Acting City Manager reminded Council that in past years the City has also invested money on its own to bring delegations to the area, so with this relationship and those dollars, which will transition into the \$50,000, the City will get more bang for its buck.

Alderman Hall said he thinks this is a great idea and asked if the WTC board had been formed yet. Mr. Tollison said that it has been formed but they're looking to grow it. Alderman Hall also asked about Council's involvement, who sits on the board from Savannah and will it be forthcoming real soon. The Mayor and Mr. Tollison both responded saying yes hopefully. The Mayor then asked Mr. Tollison if he had to take the request for a Council seat back to the board. He stated yes but he didn't foresee a problem with that and was fairly certain WTC could accommodate a spot. He then asked Attorney Stillwell for confirmation, and he stated the WTC is a subsidiary of SEDA and one-third of their board members are appointed by the City. He also stated that several City appointees sit on the WTC board, but there was general consensus that this was not the same as Council representation. The Mayor stated they would get together and work that out. Alderman Bell stated that this partnering runs parallel to City Soul, the past and current administration have both attempted to showcase Savannah on the world stage, and the relationships created were exceptional. Alderman Johnson stated that Savannah is an international city with global aspirations, but in the past the City has lacked the construct or formation to support that infrastructure. He says the City needs someone on the board to protect the City's interest; it is a significant amount of money and if needed the amount could be up to fifty. Alderman Johnson said he is fully in support of this, but feels they should put their money where their mouth is.

The Mayor agreed that Savannah is becoming global and acknowledged that SEDA is doing a fantastic job reaching out to other countries, but with WTC right in the community it's good to see the other partners and she's hopes that they extend the same invitation to the County as well to become a part of this. She said this is needed, it shows that everyone is on the same page, and hopes that today they will pass on this. Alderman Sprague said she wanted to clarify that she is one hundred percent in favor of this, but is always careful to protect taxpayer money which is

what their job is. She also asked what WTC goals were for 2013, and Mr. Tollison said they just passed their business plan and he could email it to everyone. The Mayor suggested they set up a workshop as this will provide a public platform and will benefit the community as well as Council because it is aired. Mr. Tollison said they will check their calendar for the best time and make a decision on Monday.

Alderman Sprague stated the need for more protocol training for the City was discussed at the last Greater Savannah International Alliance meeting. She said the City has a serious issue with not understanding protocol for other countries and asked how the WTC will go about addressing this deficit. Mr. Tollison stated they have an entire department within WTC who they call on for protocol purposes and the product can be utilized for the City. She asked if they had funding for this and he said they do have an hourly charge, but they will work all that out for them. The Mayor stated that her staff has used this service already for her trip to Israel, and she was very extremely prepared. She said it will be a plus for the City and asked the Acting City Manager to set up the date. The Mayor stated that she had to leave because she was invited to a meeting at the Housing Authority where the United States Secretary of HUD would be speaking. She will participate in the roundtable discussion and will return for the 2 pm Council meeting.

Mural Policy

Acting City Manager Stephanie Cutter stated that Ellen Harris with the Metropolitan Planning Commission and said she appeared before Council last year and provided an overview of Murals, Markers and Statues. At that time, Council had some concerns regarding the notification process and wanted final approval as it comes before Council. She introduced Ms. Harris and said she was here to provide council with the presentation Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah, to walk them through the notification process and to answer any questions they have on this topic. Ms. Harris stated that although the focus of her presentation would be on the notification process, she wanted to go over some items from the May 2012 meeting and reviewed the purpose and history of murals in Savannah and how they have been utilized over the years. She discussed the criteria, theme, location, design, funding, enforcements, maintenance and who is responsible for those areas. She also provided definitions for graffiti, mural and a sign, and noted the distinctions between them. She explained that sometimes there will be shades of grey with the three definitions and the City Zoning Administrator is the final authority and makes the determination when needed. She outlined the review process and said the definition of a mural was broadened by replacing the term paint with apply and including other materials. Alderman Sprague asked her to expand on the materials other than paint and she said it could be chalk, fabric materials, and even paper potentially.

Ms. Harris summarized the existing review process from submittal of the application and notification of media, to feedback from TAC and the City Council decision for markers, monuments, and all public art. She discussed the Historic Site and Monument Commission (HSMC) and gave an overview on the various notification options available, similar application review processes and certificates of appropriateness. She outlined the HSMC recommended review process noting HSMC wants signs posted on property ten days in advance of a public meeting, and that City Council make final decisions for signs posted on public property and HSMC make those decisions for private property. Alderman Sprague asked about the current zoning variances, the sign posting requirement and the number of days. Ms. Harris stated there is a sign posting requirement including a newspaper announcement and a fifteen day requirement for variances. Alderman Sprague stated she thought the 10 day posting was too short because it is a problem when people go on vacation, then a neighbor wants to do something and quickly

puts up a sign, the people return and it's a done deal. She said this makes her a little hesitant about the 10 day requirement.

Alderman Osborne asked to see the previous slide and asked why the neighborhood associations were not listed. Ms. Harris said that their recommendation to Council was that for consistency they should adopt the COA process. Alderman Osborne stated that since it has to come to City Council for a decision but wasn't presented to the neighborhood associations, she will try her very best to ask every Council member not to approve it. She stated she was the one who suffered the last time a mural was put up without approval from neighborhood associations and it was very ugly. Alderman Johnson stated the bottom line is that it is up to Council to approve these recommendations, and they can insert something if needed. He also agreed with Alderman Osborne and said the situation was indeed rough. She feels very strongly and they should be included in the review process. Alderman Sprague said she agreed with the aldermen and said for private property she felt there should be an appeal process in place.

Alderman Johnson asked who was responsible for posting the sign, and Ms. Harris stated currently it depends on the process but in this proposal MPC would provide the sign and the applicant would have to post it. Alderman Johnson also stated that there needs to be some consistency as to where and when it should be posted. Alderman Shabazz also agreed with the aldermen on including the neighborhood associations in the review process and having an appeals process. Alderman Hall asked how long after signs are posted is the media notified. Ms. Harris said the media is notified as soon as their agenda is prepared which they try to have one week in advance before a public hearing, with copies sent to all media. Alderman Hall stated that everyone is notified of the process except the neighborhood associations, and he thinks it was merely an oversight and HSMC didn't actually mean to do that. Alderman Johnson said the reality is that in their line of work HSMC doesn't interact with the community the way Council does, and he has every expectation that it will become a part of the process. At Ms. Cutter suggestion, Ms. Harris continue with MPC's recommendations which included sign posting and written notification to property owners. Alderman Johnson asked if the neighborhood association exclusion was a staff recommendation, Ms. Harris responded yes and Alderman Johnson confirmed that Council just needed to put it back in. He then asked how they proceed and Ms. Harris said she would be happy to bring it back as a regular agenda item. Ms. Cutter said a request was made by Alderman Thomas to have a workshop where MPC can respond to questions from Council.

Alderman Bordeaux stated that everyone is in favor of including the neighborhood associations in the review process, but said the 10 day requirement makes it more difficult since most of the associations meet once a month and asked HSMC to take that into account. Alderman Sprague noted their handout said that maintenance of murals was the responsibility of property owners and thought removal should have been in there. She also asked if alleys were considered a public right-of-way and were existing murals part of the previous or the current policy. Ms. Harris said it could be a policy decision by Council, but she had a discussion with Property Maintenance and they thought all murals should be brought into compliance with the current document and not grandfathered in. Alderman Bell said Council received an email from Ms. Mobley and asked if she could speak before Council. Alderman Johnson asked if everyone was okay with that, and she said her major concern was the unclear notification requirements for the public.

Alderman Bordeaux wanted to know the best way to notify the public without spending large amounts of money. Ms. Mobley said the neighborhood associations and the media were the best vehicles to use and gave the tourism meeting January 8th and the public access channel as

examples. Alderman Bordeaux asked if the public access channel would suffice and she said no that public meetings in the evenings were also needed. Alderman Hall asked if the listed review process steps and the neighborhood associations were adequate for her, and how much more do they need to add or do to the process. She said many people don't belong to the associations and they should have an MPC-sponsored workshop in the affected areas. Tom Thomson of MPC agreed with her and gave an overview of their process. Alderman Bell asked if the COA sign indicated when the media would occur, and Alderman Shabazz asked if they add the media to their station would that be adequate and Ms. Mobley said yes. Alderman Hall said they can add more sign information to their public notices as well. Alderman Bell asked if it was the responsibility of HSMC to ensure whatever is put up is supposed to go up and she said that was correct. Matthew Hebermehl of See Savannah Art Walls spoke briefly about his organization and his feelings regarding the mural policy. Alderman Osborne asked if he saw any obstruction with the current process, and he said no.

Alderman Johnson said he and Alderman Bell were at a Victorian Neighborhood association meeting recently about gun shows and received negative comments about Council allowing gun shows in public-owned facilities in Savannah. Alderman Johnson stated that Alderman Bordeaux would know more about the legality of not allowing gun shows in City facilities. He said he would be hesitant to say that because they disagree with one's views on guns that they not allow gun shows. Alderman Sprague said she thinks that disallowing gun shows is too restrictive, and Alderman Osborne said she would like to see a total review of this, but if the Council prohibited gun shows in public facilities it would definitely make a statement.

Alderman Bell said she would like to see a rendering of what has happened in the past, and if Ms. Reese and Ms. Cutter can provide them with prior Council discussions and decisions on this topic. Alderman Johnson stated that the police department should be included as there is a need to review the history of guns sold and bought at gun shows. Alderman Bell said she has been asked by her constituents why gun shows are allowed in the Martin Luther King Arena, and she was not able to give them an answer. It was agreed by all that more information on this topic is needed. Alderman Bell stated that the Sun Trust Bank in the Kroger store in her district is closing, and residents wanted to know if there was anything that Council could do.

Gordon Varnedoe with the Alzheimer's Organization spoke briefly about their Across the Land 2013 event they are having on Saturday, January 12, 2013 and asked if a Council member would attend on behalf of the City. Alderman Bell volunteered to represent Council.

Council broke for lunch.

Acting City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of January 10, 2013. The agenda is attached and made a part of the permanent record.

Alderman Van R. Johnson, II Mayor Pro-tem adjourned this meeting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dyanne C. Reese". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Dyanne C. Reese, MMC, Clerk of Council